

REASONS FOR SEEKING GOD

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*“Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion,
and turneth the shadow of death into the morning,
and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea,
and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name.”*
Amos 5:8

IDOLATRY has been, in every age, the besetting sin of mankind. In some form or another, the unregenerate are all given to it and even in God's people there remains, in their old nature, a tendency towards it.

In its grosser manifestation, idolatry is the desire of man to see God with his eyes, to have outward representation of Him who cannot be represented, who is too great, too spiritual, ever to be described by human language, much less to be set forth by images of wood, and stone, however elaborately carved and cunningly overlaid with gold. There is a great God who fills all space and yet is greater than space—whose existence is without beginning and without end, who is everywhere present and universally self-existent.

But man is so unspiritual that he will not worship this invisible One in spirit and in truth, but craves after outward similitudes, symbols, and signs. If Aaron makes a calf, Israel forgets the divine JEHOVAH's glory and says of the image of an ox that eats grass, “These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”

We are apt to imagine that it is a very strange freak of human depravity when men are led to worship visible objects and signs, but it is not at all unusual or singular. It is the general sin of all mankind. I suppose no man has been entirely free from it, and every believer has to contend against it in its subtler forms, for idolatry takes insinuating shapes, less gross in appearance than the worship of Dagon or Ashtaroah, but quite as sinful.

Take, for instance, the common religious idolatry of our own country which consists, in part, of reverence to holy places, as if under the Christian dispensation, which is not one of type, but of fact, holiness could inhere in stone, lime, wood, slate, iron, and brass, when architecturally arranged.

English idolatry further reveals itself in reverence to an order of men, not because of their superior character, but because of certain mystic rites performed upon them, by virtue of which they are supposed to become the representatives of heaven and the reservoirs of divine grace. How trustful are our English idolaters in these men when they behold them appareled in vestments which the tailor has cut into fashions remarkably helpful to devotion! Without these priests and their sumptuous adorning, and grotesque disfigurements, our modern idolaters cannot publicly worship—but in these they have as much trust as the Ephesians had in their great goddess Diana.

They can only worship their God by objects which appeal to the senses. An outward altar, an outward priest, an outward ritual, outward rites—all these are nothing but another form of the old idolatry of Babel and of Bethel. Man still turns from the unseen God. The unseen Priest who has passed within the veil, man still ignores.

The spiritual feast upon the body and blood of Jesus Christ, which is the joy of the saints, they know not. But the outward emblems are adored by some and held in great reverence by others. Bread and

wine, which are but created and common things, even when placed on the table to assist us in communion, are made into deities by the blind idolaters of this age. Could Egypt or Assyria do worse?

Bread used at the ordinance is but bread and nothing other than ordinary bread. Its emblematic use imparts to it no measure or degree of sanctity, much less of divinity. It is idolatry—flat, groveling idolatry—and nothing less, which on all sides is spreading its mantle of darkness over this land under the pretense of profoundly reverent piety.

Where Ritualism does not reign, how easy it is for men to be idolaters of themselves! What is self-reliance, understood as too many understand it, but idolatry of self? It is the opposite of dependence upon the living God, the great source of power and wisdom. Reliance upon my own wisdom, upon my own resolution, upon my own strength of mind—these are idolatries in a subtle and attractive shape.

What is much of our overweening affection to our children and to our relatives? What is our unsubmissive repining but idolatry? How is it that we rebel against God if our friends are suddenly taken from us? O man, why is it that your God has so little of your love and the creature so much? There is a lawful affection—up to that point, you should go. There is an unlawful affection when, by any means, the creature comes before the Creator—to this you may not descend. Unlawful love, love which idolizes its object, is to be avoided with all our might.

Then, again, perhaps a less excusable form of idolatry, though no excuse is to be offered for any, is that in which men idolize their estates and their confidence in their accumulations—living only to acquire wealth and position—struggling in the race—not to win the crown which is immortal—but that poor wreath with which men crown the wealthy merchant, the diligent student, the eloquent barrister, the valiant man of arms. This is idolatry again, for it is setting up an earthly object in the place of the Creator. To God is due all my love, my trust, my fear. He made me and therefore I am bound to serve Him—and whenever I lay down, at the feet of any person or object, dominion over my powers, apart from God, I am at once guilty of idolatry.

I cannot stay to tell you all the various form which this idolatry assumes, but may God give us grace to strive against them. And you who are still held captive by these idolatries, may He deliver! May He save you from leaning upon an arm of flesh, from trusting in what may be seen and handled, and bring you to rely upon the invisible God, to whom alone belongs power and strength, and who has a right to our confidence and our service!

The text is addressed to those who have been guilty, either in word, or thought, or deed, of idolatry against God. It gives arguments to persuade them to turn away from everything else, and to seek the true God. We shall read the text, first, *in its natural sense* and then, diving into its meaning a little more deeply, *we shall find spiritual reasons in it for seeking JEHOVAH, and JEHOVAH alone.*

I. First, then, IN THE NATURAL SENSE OF THE TEXT, we find a truth which is plain enough, but which we need to constantly be reminded of, namely, that *JEHOVAH is really God*. If JEHOVAH were not really the Creator of the world, if He did not in very deed make “the seven stars and Orion,” if He did not actually work in the operations of providence, changing the night into day, and day again into night, we might be excusable for not rendering Him service, since homage might be safely withheld from an imaginary deity.

But *as God is real* and exists as truly as we do, as our existence is dependent upon His sovereign will, and He is All-in-all, *it is due to Him that we should “seek his face.”* And simple as that utterance is, I have need to push it home to you. I am afraid, dear friends, that many of you think of religion in its bearing towards God as being a very proper, but at the same time, imaginative, matter. You do not practically grasp the thought that God is and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. You do not lay hold upon the fact that as surely as there are fellow creatures round about you, there is a God close to you, in whom you live, and move, and have your being.

The worldly man puts his foot down on the earth and he says, , and he says, “Ah! I believe in this. Here is something solid and I feel it.” He takes up certain fragments of that earth, yellow and glittering, and he says, “This is the main chance. I believe in this.”

Just so, the created earth is real to him and God, who created all things, is to him but a shadowy being. He may not rudely deny His existence, but practically, he reduces his thought of God to a mere fancy and says in his heart, “No God.”

My attentive hearer, I trust that you are not so unwise. You know that God is, that He *is* even if we *are not*, that He fills all things and that He dwells everywhere—and since He is the Creator, the First and Chief of all things, I trust you are anxious to seek Him and to yield to Him your obedience.

Note, from the text, that God is not only the true God, but *He is the glorious God*. I cannot understand how the heathen, supposing their gods had been gods, could worship such little, mean, base, and contemptible beings. Think of Jove, for instance, the great god of Rome and Greece—what a disgusting animal he was! What a monster of sensuality, selfishness, and folly! I should feel it hard, as a creature, to worship such a god as that, if he could be a god.

But when I think of Him who made “the seven stars and Orion,” who stretched out the heavens like a curtain and made the sky as a molten looking-glass—who is magnificent in the acts of creation, marvelous in the wonders of grace, and unsearchable in all the attributes of His nature, my soul feels it to be her honor and delight to adore Him. It is an elevation to the soul to stoop to the dust before such a God.

The more we reverence Him, and the less we become in our own sight, the more sublime are our emotions. Well did even a heathen say, “To serve God is to reign.” To serve such a God as ours is to be made kings and priests. Oh, were not our hearts perverted and depraved, it would be our greatest happiness, our highest rapture, to sound forth the praises of a God so glorious, and our hearts would be always inquiring of Him, “Lord, what will You have me do? Your will is wiser and better than my own will. I ask no greater liberty than to be bound with Your bands of love. I ask no greater ease than to bear Your blessed yoke.”

Since, then, the Lord is real and moreover, so glorious as to be infinitely worthy of worship, we should seek Him and live.

Again, *JEHOVAH, the true God, is most powerful* for He “maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: JEHOVAH is his name.”

Think reverently of Him, for He is not like the gods of the heathen, of whom the psalmist said in satire, “Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not: they have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.”

Contempt and ridicule are poured upon these wooden gods by the prophet Isaiah when he tells of the workman who takes one end of a log and makes a god of it—and with the other part kindles a fire and warms his hands and cooks his food. Such a god as this it is indeed a degradation for the human mind to worship.

But the true God, who has displayed His power in the glittering firmament and in the foaming sea, who is revealed with wonder to the eye of the astronomer in the innumerable worlds revolving in boundless space—such a God we must reverence. In the hour of storm and tempest, when the Lord is abroad, riding in His chariot of thunder-cloud upon wings of the wind, casting forth His hailstones and coals of fire, making the earth shake at the sound of His voice and breaking the cedars of Lebanon with the flash of His spear, we feel we must adore Him. And as we bow before Him, reason endorses the worship which grace suggests. Is not His power a cogent argument for seeking Him? Will not you who have hitherto lived without Him, now adore Him? A real God, so glorious and so powerful, should surely command your reverent adoration.

Further, *He is a God who works great marvels*, achieving wonders every moment which would astonish us if we were not so used to beholding them. They tell the story—’tis but a legend of the days of Solomon the wise—that the king astonished all beholders by taking a seed and producing from it, in a

few moments, a full-grown plant. They cried, “How wonderful! How astonishing!” But the wise man said, “This is only what the Lord does every day. This is what He is performing everywhere in His own time, and you see it, and yet you never say, ‘How wonderful!’”

When we have watched those who practice sleight-of-hand perform their feats, we have marveled greatly, but what are a few poor conjuring tricks when compared with the ordinary, but yet matchless processes of nature? Our fields and hedgerows teem with marvels never equaled by all the wisdom and skill of man.

Walk into the grass field and you tread on miracles. Listen to the birds as they sing in the trees and you hear marvelous speech. If one little mechanical bird, with a few clockwork movements, were warbling out something like music in an exhibition, everybody would gather round it, and some would even pay to hear it sing—and yet thousands of birds sing infinitely more sweetly than anything man can make—and men had rather kill them than admire them. Men fail to see the miracle which God is working in each living thing.

Turn your eyes above you to the starry firmament and watch the Pleiades and Arcturus with his sons, for though we know but little of them, they have won from many an observer an awestruck acknowledgment of the greatness of God, insomuch that it has been said that—

“An undevout astronomer is mad.”

The order, the regularity, the manifest calculation and design which appear in every one of the constellations, in every single planet, in every fixed star, and in every part of the great multitude of worlds which God has created, are such decisive evidences that, if men do not see something of God in them, they must be weak in their minds or wicked in their hearts.

Surely, what is seen of God in this way has tended to make us worship Him. Many of you may know but little of astronomy, but still, you see every day that God is working everywhere around us, and that heaven, and earth, and land, and sea, are teeming with the products of His marvelous skill. The revolutions of day and night, and the formation and fall of rain are indisputable proofs of the presence of eternal power and Godhead. Let us, therefore, seek the Lord!

How is it that a man can go up and down in God’s world and yet forget the God who made the whole? I do not suppose that a man could have walked through the Exhibition at Paris without thinking of the emperor whose influence gathered all those treasures together, and who attracted the kings and princes of the earth to visit it. And yet men will go through this world, compared with which the Paris “Exposition” was a box of children’s toys, and will not recognize God therein!

Oh, strange blindness, mad infatuation that, with God everywhere present, and such a God—the God whom to know is life eternal, whom to delight in is present happiness and future bliss—man is willingly ignorant, blind to His own best interests, senseless to the sweetest and the most ennobling emotions, and an enemy to his best Friend!

The surface of the text supplies us with motives for seeking God. Oh, that the Holy Spirit might supply us with grace that we might *feel* the motives and be obedient to them!

II. We will now regard the text WITH A MORE SPIRITUAL EYE.

We speak to those who are sensible of their departure from the living God and are anxious to be reconciled to Him by the forgiveness of their sins for Jesus’ sake. But our text also has a word for the obdurate and unawakened. In many parts of Scripture, the Lord has been pleased to invite the penitent to come to Him, but in this passage, in order that the invitation may miss none, it is made exceedingly wide in its character.

Our text will appear to be very wonderful if we notice the context in which it stands, “Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth, seek him.” There is no mention of those who thirst for Him, who are humbled, and confess their faults, but this exhortation is given to those who have no good points about them, but many of the most pernicious traits of character. Those

who turn judgment into wormwood and leave off righteousness in the earth—even they are bidden to seek God. Marvelous mercy!

Who after this shall dare despair? If my hearer has, up to this day, lived a stranger to God, the text does not exclude him from seeking God, but as with an angel's voice, it whispers, "Seek him." If sin has perverted your judgment, yet seek the great Creator and Preserver. Seek Him, for you shall find Him. You are not bidden to seek His face in vain—the command to seek Him implies the certainty of His being found of you.

The reasons given for seeking the Lord are, spiritually, these. The Lord "maketh the seven stars." That is to say, the Pleiades, and He also "makes Orion." Now, the Pleiades were regarded as being the constellation of the spring, harbinger of the coming summer. We read of "the sweet influences of Pleiades." They are most conspicuous at the vernal period of the year.

On the other hand, the Oriental herdsman, such as Amos was, when he saw Orion flaming aloft, knew the wintry sign right well. Both the Pleiades and Orion [See sermon #818, The Pleiades and Orion] are ordained of the Lord—*He makes our joys and our troubles*. See, then, the reason why we should seek God, because if Orion should just now be in the ascendant, and we should be visited with a winter of despondency, chilled by howling winds of fear and sharp frosts of dismay—if we seek God, He can withdraw Orion and place us under the gentle sway of the Pleiades of promise, so that a springtime of hope and comfort shall cheer our souls, to be succeeded by a summer of rare delights and fruitful joys.

Hear you this, poor troubled one? Whatever your sorrow may be, the God who made heaven and earth can suddenly change it into the brightest joy. By the dispensations of His providence, He can do it. Your circumstances, which are now so desperate, can be changed by a touch of His hand within an hour. To whom can you better apply for succor?

And if your heart be sick and sad with a sense of sin, and you are pining with remorse, His grace can find a balm and cordial for your wounded conscience, which shall give you peace at once. Before the clock ticks again, God can grant you perfect salvation, blot out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your iniquities. Seek you the pardoning God. Seek Him, I say, for to whom else should you go? Where else should you look for strength but to the Strong? Where else for mercy but to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

The Lord, moreover, turns grief into joy. In the text it is added, "He turneth the shadow of death into the morning." The long dark night of sorrow, blacker than darkness itself because it presages everlasting wrath, the night created by the grim shadow of death—cold, chill, terrible—may have fallen upon your soul, but the living God can at once turn this darkness into the brightness of the morning.

When the sun arises with healing beneath his wings, the whole earth is made to smile, and even thus can the Lord at once make your whole nature glad with the light of His countenance. Though you are ready to lie down in despair, though you suppose that hell yawns for you, and will soon receive your guilty soul—He can turn this shadow of death into the morning of peace and joy.

To whom, then, should you go but to this God? He has already given His dear Son to be the way of life for us sinners. Have you ever heard of another who gave His son to die for His enemies? Gad not about after other helpers, but come at once to your Heavenly Father's arms, and say with the prodigal, "I will arise and go to my Father."

If you are willing to come to God, the way is open, for Jesus died. You must not come arrayed in the supposed fitness of your own good works or good feelings, but you must come resting on the finished work of the appointed Savior. If you look to Him, you shall be lightened. If you come with His name upon your lips, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. Should not this be a reason for coming—that He can turn your night into day, your winter into summer?

But the text bears another aspect, namely, that *God can also turn your present joy into grief* and therefore you should seek Him. He makes the seven stars give way to Orion. "He maketh day dark with night." At this moment, it may be that you are at ease—but how long will you be so? Though you have no God, you are content with what you possess in this world, satisfied with your daily earnings, or with

your yearly income, charmed with your wife, your children, your estate. But remember how soon your joys may be taken from you.

Have you not heard how often God's providence has stripped the house, stripped the family, stripped the man's very soul of every comfort? Remember you not the story of Job who, in one day descended from riches to poverty? Know you not that, although the wicked spread themselves abroad like a green bay tree, they shall suddenly wither, and though they are exceeding proud and strong, they shall come to their appointed end, like the ox fattened for the slaughter?

All our joys on earth are dependent upon the sovereign will of heaven. Some of you know this by bitter experience, for you have seen the delight of your eyes taken away in a stroke, and the comfort of your heart carried to the grave. Now, to whom should you fly for succor, but to Him upon whom all your present comfort depends and who can so soon take it all away?

How prudent to be at peace with Him! How wise, above all wisdom, to be reconciled to the mighty God! But alas for those who have often been warned, but who will not heed the warning! They have hardened their necks and will be suddenly destroyed. Their day will blacken into everlasting night. The proud sinner will die as others do—his eye will pale and his brow grow cold, for he must face inexorable Death.

And then, when he comes into the land to which the wicked are banished, he will enter into the outer darkness, darkness which shall be felt, in the land of confusion, where there is no beginning of hope, or end of misery—who would then desire to stand in his soul's stead? Escape then before the darkness gathers. Seek Him, O man, who makes the day dark with night!

*“Ye sinners, seek His grace,
Whose wrath we cannot bear;
Fly to the shelter of His cross,
And find salvation there.”*

The last clause of the text suggests a fourth reason for seeking the Lord, namely, *God may make that which is a blessing to some a curse to others*. Did you observe it? Seek Him “that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth.” This may allude to the deluge, when the waters of the ocean covered the very tops of the mountains.

But it may be equally well-explained by reference to the clouds which yield refreshing rain. The sun draws up the waters of the sea, leaving the salt behind, and when these exaltations have floated their appointed time in the air, they descend upon the thirsty earth to make glad the soil. Now, since the clause bears two readings, it were well to note how the actions of God oftentimes bear two renderings.

There is, for instance, the gift of His dear Son, an unexampled act of love—and yet to some of you it will prove “a savor of death unto death.” To the unbeliever, it will prove a terrible thing that Jesus ever came into the world. He is a precious cornerstone to those who build upon Him, but those who stumble upon Him shall be broken—and if this Stone shall fall upon any man, it shall grind him to powder.

That which is heaven's greatest joy is hell's greatest horror. When Christ shall come, the sight of Him shall draw forth the acclamations of His people, but it will also cause the utmost anguish to His enemies. They shall weep and wail because of Him. They shall call upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, and hide them from the face of Him who sits upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. Since you, who so constantly hear the Gospel must have it made to you either a savor of death unto death or of life unto life, I pray that the Eternal Spirit may show you the wisdom of seeking God by Jesus Christ—and of seeking Him now.

It will be a dreadful thing, at the last great day, to find the gentle Lamb become a Lion to you, to tear you in pieces when there shall be none to deliver! Why should that, which is the meat of humble souls, become your poison? Why should the blood of that Savior, in which so many have washed their robes, and made them white, be your condemnation?

Remember that the blood of Jesus will be either upon you to cleanse you or upon you to condemn you. That dreadful cry of the Jews in the streets of Jerusalem, “His blood be on us, and on our children”—what a curse it brought upon their race in the massacres within the city walls, and in the bitter exile and suffering which they have so long endured! Take care that the same curse does not bring upon you an eternal exile from God!

Seek His face, I beseech you! You may not long have the opportunity to seek it. The day of His mercy may close as closes this day with the setting sun. You may not survive to enjoy another day of Gospel invitation. May God the blessed Spirit, who alone can do it, make you seekers—and then make you finders—and His shall be the praise!

Thus much to the unconverted. The people of God can think over the text in relation to themselves. It is rich in priceless instruction to them, but time forbids me to direct their meditations. Farewell.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

Psalm 139

In this Psalm, David praises God by specially dwelling upon the one attribute of omniscience. If we really wish to praise God, we must think of Him as He is, and it is the best praise that we can render to God to describe Him as He is. And any one of His many attributes is so full of His glory that, if we give due honor to it, we shall have much to say upon it.

Verse 1. *O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.*

It is true that God knows everything, but that is not what David says here. He makes a personal application of the universal truth, “O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.” He does not talk about God’s knowledge of other men, but he speaks to God concerning himself, “O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.” “‘Thou hast searched me,’ as if You were looking for contraband goods. You have ransacked me, You have gone down into my very heart, and have spread out every secret part of my being—‘Thou hast searched me, and known me.’”—

*“Lord, Thou hast search’d and seen me through,
Thine eye commands with piercing view
My rising and my resting hours,
My heart and flesh, with all their powers.”*

2. *Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.*

“What I do, and what I do not do—my downsitting for rest and my uprising for action—You know me altogether, my most trivial deeds, and my most important movements. My thoughts are so well known to You that, even before I think them, You know what they will be. You need not come near to me in order to know me, so strong is Your eye that if You only look at me from a vast distance as a man looks at a star in the midnight air, ‘thou understandest my thought afar off.’

What I think and why I think it, whether it be sorrowful or hopeful, You understand my thought. Sometimes, I cannot understand it myself, but You always understand it.”

3. *Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.*

“You have put a ring around me both in my stayings and my goings. I go to sleep, but You do not sleep. I cannot think of You while I slumber, but You think of me, and Thou ‘art acquainted with all my ways.’”

*“Great God, Thy penetrating eye
Pervades my inmost powers;
With awe profound my wondering soul
Falls prostrate, and adores.”*

*“To be encompass’d round with God,
The holy and the just;
Arm’d with omnipotence to save,
Or crush me into dust!”*

*“Oh, how tremendous is the thought!
Deep may it be impress’d!
And may the Spirit firmly grave,
This truth within my breast!”*

4. *For there is not a word on my tongue, but lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.*

“You not only know what it is, but You know all about it—even the word which I have not yet spoken, the word that is on my tongue, as well as the word that is not on my tongue. Those seeds of speech that have as yet not grown into words, You know them altogether.”

5. *Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.*

“Like men lying in ambush, ‘Thou hast beset me behind and before.’ All that I have ever done and all that I shall ever do, You know it all. I am like one under arrest, upon whom the officer lays his hand so that he may have no opportunity of escaping. I am in Your grip. You have taken such a firm hold upon me that I cannot get away from You. In another sense, I am like a child enfolded in His mother’s arms, for You have ‘laid thine hand upon me.’”

6. *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain unto it.*

“I cannot climb up to Your glorious throne—the very lowest step of it is far higher than my feet can reach. ‘I cannot attain unto it.’”

7. *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?*

“I do not want to do so, but it would be quite impossible for me to flee from Your presence even if I wished to do so. Neither by steady marching, nor by rapid flight, can I get away from You.”

8. *If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:*

The Hebrew is, “Thou there,” as if there was nothing else there but God.

8. *If I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there.*

This seemed even more amazing to the psalmist than that God was in heaven, so he put in a “behold”—“Behold, thou.”

9. *If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;*

“If I fly on the wings of light, which travels with inconceivable rapidity,”

10. *Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

“I cannot go there except by Your leading and I shall not be there except by Your uplifting. There is no way by which I can keep away from God even if I try to do so. If, instead of living in the light, I seek to hide myself in the darkness, what then?”

11. *If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.*

“The very night shall change its nature and turn from darkness into light.”

12. *Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*

See, my dear brethren, how we dwell continually under the inspection of God? You have seen bees in a glass hive and watched all their movements, or you have put an insect under a powerful microscope and examined every part of it. Even so does the omniscient God watch and examine you. Nothing is done by you that He does not observe. The poet speaks of the fierce light that beats about the throne of man, but you dwell in that far fiercer light which beats about the throne of God.

13. *For thou hast possessed my reins:*

“Those secret organs of my body which I cannot see, and whose working I can only imperfectly comprehend.”

13. *Thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb.*

“Even before I came on the stage of action, You were exercising wondrous care over me.”

14. *I will praise thee;*

That is a good resolution for each one of us, as well as the psalmist, to make. As God sees me, let me praise Him—it will be pleasing to Him to hear me praising Him. “I will praise thee;”

14. *For I am fearfully and wonderfully made:*

Nobody can rightly study the anatomy of the human body and see the beautiful arrangement of the various veins, and nerves, and sinews, and muscles, and bones without saying with the psalmist, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made:”

14. *Marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.*

To study God’s marvelous works, you need not go abroad, for they can be plainly seen in your own body. This earthly house of your tabernacle, in which you dwell so long as you are in this world, is a masterpiece of divine wisdom and skill.

15. *My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.*

God made us in His secret workshop by a marvelous method of divine power.

16. *Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.*

God’s wonderful foreknowledge enabled Him to know us even before we knew ourselves or anyone else knew us. And in the very making of us, the creation of our body and mind and spirit, God was beforehand with us.

17. *How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!*

“I love to remember that You, my God, are thinking of me. I am not distressed or alarmed by that recollection. I do not say, ‘How terrible are thy thoughts unto me, O God.’ But ‘How precious’—how consoling, how full of promises of blessing to me—‘are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!’”

18. *If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.*

“You lull me to sleep and You awake me in the morning. And when I open my eyes, You are still there.” Happy believer, who is always with God! Why should not You and I, dear friends, always be consciously in the presence of God? We are never right unless we are in that condition—and if we ever begin to forget God, we are in a wrong state of heart. If we can live, from day to day, without realizing that God is near us, we are falling into a sad and dangerous condition.

19. *Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God:*

It cannot be that God has seen all their wicked acts and read their evil thoughts, and yet will spare them. When men offend in the very presence of the judge, it is easy work for him to try them.

19. *Depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.*

“You men of blood, you men stained with the blood of your fellows, get away from me, for I do not want to be harboring criminals. God sees my company as well as myself so depart from me.”

20. *For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain.*

David could not bear even the thought that men should insult such a God—a want of reverence to the All-seeing One was altogether unbearable to him, so he bade those who were guilty of such wickedness to take themselves away from him.

21-22. *Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.*

We are to love our own enemies, but we are not to love God’s enemies, nor willingly to mix with them. How can Christian men associate with the lewd and irreverent without becoming partakers of their evil deeds? Let us take note of what David says and realize that we cannot be the friends of God if we are the friends of God’s enemies.

Now the psalmist comes back to his key-note. He began the Psalm with the declaration, “O LORD, thou hast searched me,” and now he prays,

23. *Search me, O God, and know my heart:*

“You have searched me, O God, but I pray You to do it again, and to keep on doing it—never take Your great searchlight away from me.”

23. *Try me, and know my thoughts:*

“I cannot hide them from You and would not if I could.”

24. *And see if there be any wicked way in me,*

“Lord, look for the dross, to consume it. Look for the spots, to wash them away.”

24. *And lead me in the way everlasting.*

“Amen,” our hearts say, “Amen—so let it be.”

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.